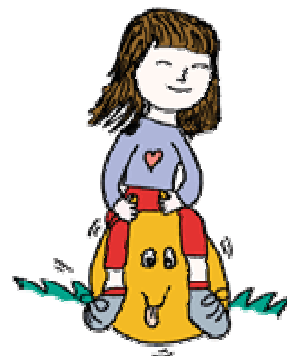


## Annex 1

# Taking Play Forward Play Policy Draft 2010 - 2013



Taking Play Forward

## COVER PAGE

NB. Please be aware that this is **DRAFT** only and requires:

- Design including formatting, images and photographs

## **Mission statement**

**To provide the best possible play opportunities, activities, events and environments, which are safe, suitable, easy to get at, affordable, stimulating, varied and, above all, fun.**

We want more of our community to understand and value play, not only as a worthwhile activity, but as an essential for each individual's well being.

What we provide must respect the right of children to play freely and safely on their own, or interact with other children, adults and carers. In each context, it must be relevant to children's stage of development and physical and mental capabilities, responsive to their choices, opinions, reactions and respect equality.

## Endorsements

Text to follow..

- Cllr Carol Runciman  
Executive Member for Children's Services  
City of York Council

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## Influencing Play

### **Introduction**

Over a number of years, York has had a growing focus on the importance of play which has been clearly visible through its policy, **Taking Play Forward**, first written in 2002 and refreshed again in 2007.

### **National Perspective**

Since 2007, a number of key initiatives have taken place at a national level to support. These have included;-

- **2006 Children's Play Lottery Initiative**, an investment of £155 million through the Children's Play programme
- £124 million allocated across local authorities
- £16 million (Playful Ideas) to support the voluntary sector
- £15 million to set up the Play England project – to develop a support for the development of play strategy at a local level
- **The Children's Plan 2007 2008**
- **National Strategy for Play**
- **2008** the introduction of a number of best practice guidance including, '**Design for Play**' and '**Managing Risk in Play Provision**'

In **2010**, Play England and partners called for the next government to make play a priority, outlined in a '**Manifesto for Children's Play**', which asks political parties to make 3 simple pledges for all children and young people to have the freedom and space to play as enjoyed by previous generations.

This thinking is echoed in the **2010** launch of the new Government's, **Big Society**, which calls for a focus on public service reform, social action and community empowerment.

### **Local Perspective**

The City of York Council has had a long standing commitment to the support and promotion of Play across the city. National initiatives have contributed to the development of play at a local level and have helped raise the profile and quality of play and play-related activities across the city.

### **Background – local context**

In **1998**, City of York Council signed up to the UN Convention on The Rights of the Child.

In **2002**, the Taking Play Forward was adopted as a policy and vision for play through the Executive members for Education that requested:

- the use of the Best Play objectives for evaluation and continuous improvement of play provision
- strategic support for the proposed framework of **Taking Play Forward** as a City of York Policy and Strategy for Play.

In **2005**, the City of York Council's continuing commitment to play was through the introduction of a designated play team based in the Lifelong Learning and Culture service arm of the Communities and Neighbourhoods Directorate, who are best placed to further consult and develop links with the play sector.

In **2007**, the Taking Play Forward policy underwent a refresh and taken for approval to Executive Members for Children's Services and Advisory Panel. In this refresh the policy embraced new national documents and policies.

Play features in the **2009** edition of the **Children and Young People's Plan** specifically priority 14 which details the importance of 'developing and extending' York's Play Strategy.

The Taking Play Forward policy endorses the 'Manifesto for Children's Play' and will look to support it at a local level.

### **What are the aims of the policy ?**

**Taking Play Forward** aims to:

Clarify the council's commitment to and understanding of play. The play policy is a practical working tool to help every individual and organisation deal with issues concerning children's play environments.

Commit to supporting high quality play experiences for all children and young people across the City of York

Develop new opportunities and embrace best practice

Demonstrate the benefits of play and how it contributes to wider local and national social agendas

**Taking Play Forward** is the name for the ever evolving collective vision and strategy for play in York. It is a living, flexible approach, relevant to all children and young people up to 18 years old\*, all adults, whether or not they are parents/carers, and all organisations involved directly or indirectly with play.

Play is part of every community and its far reaching benefits need recognition. This thinking is echoed in the 2010 Government launch of the **Big Society**, which calls for a focus on public service reform, social action and community empowerment.

The policy provides a framework to:

- Set out a strategic direction and a collective vision for play opportunities which is already developing.
- Promote the rights of children and young people to be both seen and heard in all aspects of play and leisure opportunities.
- Offer a context for meeting the challenges of recognising play as part of our wider culture.
- Build a shared understanding of children's needs, and a consistent approach to challenging any obstacles that restrict play opportunities for children, as they learn and develop as valued members of our changing community.
- Provide a valuable opportunity to bring together everyone concerned with play and playwork, for a realistic and holistic approach, to develop a shared vision, with agreed guidelines, principles, accessible information, and reviewing of procedures.

- Be a user friendly document that enables settings across the city to truly value what they provide and work towards the greater goal of quality play for all children.
- Embrace and utilise national, regional and local good practice documents and guidance to further develop and promote local play opportunities.

\* In line with the age definition adopted in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the remit of Every Child Matters: Change for Children agenda, this policy applies to planning services and environments for children and young people under the age of 18

### **What have we done since our last plan ?**

Since 2007, York's Play successes include:

- Gaining **£328k** of Lottery funding which we have spent on improving Leaside Play area; installing Adventure Play equipment at Park Grove school for community use; adding outdoor climbing boulders to the play area at Rawcliffe Country Park and 3 year funding for the Running Wild project through the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, promoting environmental play at 5 sites across the city.
- Attracting funding to **improve and install play areas** within the city over a 2 year period through the Playbuilder initiative
- Securing funding for transitional and **level 3 NVQ** Playworker training places
- The formation of a **Strategic Partnership Board** to oversee the delivery and implementation of the Taking Play Forward policy.
- York has a seat on the **Board of Yorkshire Play**, a charity and limited company with aims to promote access to excellent play opportunities for all children & young people in the Yorkshire and Humber region, support play providers to develop high quality, diverse and inclusive play environments, the development of a qualified play workforce and advocate the right of all children & young people to play, through lobbying at local, regional and national levels.
- Street Sport York, a Play Team project, was nationally recognised by reaching the final stage of the 2008 **National Lottery Good Causes Awards**.
- The City of York Council Play team have distributed more than **£360k** worth of funding directly to the play sector in York to improve the quality of play experiences and help support voluntary and community sector groups.
- Playworkers from York have accessed the **Leadership and Management Course** fully funded by CWDC
- **Playshaper** Training undertaken and pledges made from a range of partners.
- Distributed copies of **Charter for Children's Play** to all play settings  
[www.playengland.org.uk](http://www.playengland.org.uk)

## Why have we chosen to update?

Taking Play Forward is ever evolving. As such it is necessary to reflect the changes that have occurred nationally and locally in the play sector, these include; the successful attraction of funding for play opportunities in to the city, working to Play England's guidance documents to aid the development of play, capitalising on national good practice, gaining a greater understanding of play at a local level.

Since the 2007 refresh the Play Team have worked with a number of new partners to help shape play opportunities in York. By updating the Policy we aim to capture this exciting progress and celebrate the achievements to date.

In developing new opportunities and supporting partners of play we have come across many challenges that affect children's ability and freedom to play on a daily basis. The policy is reflective of this.

Concerns of the sector and parents include:

- Sustainability of a structured play sector including Out of School Clubs
- Parents perceptions including safety concerns about traffic and stranger danger, older children and bullying
- Workforce – Recruitment & Retention of play workers
- Safe places to play – outdoor and risky play
- Competition within the sector - more choice now available
- Requirements through newly introduced frameworks including the Early Years Foundation Standards
- The perceptions of children and young people by local residents

Although there is some way to go, the policy outlines clear priorities for the city that are based on the concerns of the sector, children and young people, parents and communities. To ensure that play is high on the agenda and continues to have a strong presence within the City the policy sets out a plan of action to fulfil these priorities, please visit the YorOK website, [www.yor-ok.org.uk/play](http://www.yor-ok.org.uk/play) to view our Action Plan.

## York's Priorities

- Embedding play in other strategic documents: So that children's play needs are taken into consideration in all key strategies
- Raising quality and inclusiveness of play provision: So that all settings are confident to assess individual need, adapt working practice, and make the young person feel involved
- Making listening to children and young people common place throughout the authority: So that children's views on play are explicitly acknowledged and reflected in all relevant plans, services and future play provision
- Setting a new key local indicator for play: So that all children and young people and communities have access to and are involved in the development of, local, safe and freely available, quality play experiences that are within easy walking or cycling distance
- Training to improve skills and quality: So that each play setting in York will have a workforce trained to the new Playwork standards



- Supporting risk and challenge in all play activities: So that settings (including the involvement of parents/carers) can be confident in providing activities that excite and allow children to test boundaries and assess risk for themselves

### Why do we need play?

#### **What is play?**

Play is essential to children's quality of life and exploration of their culture and can be defined in the following ways:

- 'Play is freely chosen, personally directed, intrinsically motivated behaviour that actively engages the child. Play can be fun or serious.' (Best Play)
- 'What children and young people do when they follow their own ideas and interests, in their own way and for their own reasons'. (Getting Serious About Play 2004)

Children have a need and natural tendency to play anywhere. This has an impact on formal play provision and wider local authority services. In all forms of city planning and organisation, all relevant authorities need to consider and give positive support to the play environment and recognise the complex range of resources which allow children's play to happen freely. Play opportunities are more than swings and roundabouts, holiday entertainment or out of school care.

Current Playwork encourages a set of standards that are based on a set of assumptions and values that underpin good practice in Playwork. (These are outlined in Annex?? ). Best Play also describes different types of play. (These are detailed in Annex ??).

#### **The importance of and the case for Play**

Children do not distinguish between 'play' and 'work'; it is a natural aspect of their development, culture and quality of life. Play is first and foremost undertaken for enjoyment, but the benefits are far-reaching, as it plays a natural part in individual and community development. Children playing and adults taking part in cultural and leisure activities are learning about social values, beliefs and traditions. Through play and cultural initiatives, people can develop a sense of place, and civic pride, as well as community self-esteem and confidence.

The UN Convention on The Rights of the Child was ratified by the UK Government in 1991. Rights include

- the right to play (Article 31)
- their right to be consulted on matters which affect them (Article 12)
- the right to express their views (Article 13)
- the right to meet with others (Article 15)
- the right to be protected from harm and abuse (Article 19)

Thinking about play as a cultural experience can help bring people together and encourage them to have their say in decisions which affect their neighbourhoods. Play opportunities can enhance the provision of leisure, housing, transport routes, education and a range of other services for adults as well as children and young people.

## Raising the quality of Play

### **The 9 Better Play Objectives**

In 2000, play professionals developed a set of child-centred objectives for play provision that offer a set of outcomes to help clarify the role that play provision should have in the lives and development of children and young people. (National Playing Fields Association, Children's Play Council and PLAYLINK: (2000) *Best Play: What play provision should do for children.* NPFA)

The **Taking Play Forward** policy adopts these nationally recognised 7 Best Play objectives which are commended as a framework which shows how children benefit from play and quality play services. York has also included two further objectives in line with Ofsted regulations, which are referred to in this document as the Better Play Objectives and are detailed below.

The 9 Better Play Objectives provide a framework for developing and monitoring the quality of play.

- Objective 1:** The provision extends the choice and control that children have over their play, the freedom they enjoy and the satisfaction they gain from it
- Objective 2:** The provision recognises the child's need to test boundaries and responds positively to that need
- Objective 3:** The provision manages the balance between the need to offer risk and the need to keep children safe from harm
- Objective 4:** The provision maximises the range of play opportunities
- Objective 5:** The provision fosters independence and self-esteem
- Objective 6:** The provision fosters children's respect for others and offers opportunities for social interaction
- Objective 7:** The provision fosters the child's well-being, healthy growth and development, knowledge and understanding, creativity and capacity to learn.
- Objective 8:** The provision meets the necessary legislative requirements
- Objective 9:** The organisation involves users in decision making and consultation

Best Play objectives can also form the basis for evaluation and continuous improvement of play provision. See the 'Better Play' Criteria listed in Annex c.

The Better Play Objectives aim to:

- Raise the standards of play provision
- Make sure children and young people know and exercise their rights to play, culture, rest and leisure
- Encourage genuine communication and interactions between children and young people, individuals and services with interests in play
- Create flexibility in the use of play resources
- Identify accessible criteria for funding and developing play opportunities
- Increase public recognition of the importance of play and enable relevant legislative requirements to be met
- Better manage play environments and increase recognition of the complex resources needed to provide stimulating children's play opportunities

## Quality Schemes

As well as the 9 Better Play Objectives, **Taking Play Forward** also recognises and actively promotes and encourages organisations to sign up to relevant quality schemes and endorse the use of best practice resources.

These include:-

- **'Steps to Quality'** This scheme has been developed in York and North Lincolnshire to offer a quality assurance award for day care providers. One of the main principles of the scheme states that "play forms the basis of children's daily experience". Steps to Quality provides a framework to recognise and develop good quality play provision, and is now in use in four local authorities within the Yorkshire and Humber region.
- **'Aiming High for Young People (draft)'** was published March 2010 and was developed by the DCSF and the Commissioning Support Programme to help improve the outcomes achieved by young people by setting out the characteristics of good quality provision. The standards will be tested during the spring/ summer 2010 through the Children's Trust in nine local areas and the final Quality Standards will be published in October 2010.
- the Criteria for an **enriched play environment** outlined in Best Play, What Play Provision Should do for Children, published by the National Playing Field Association, March 2000.
- **Quality in Play** – Play England's quality assurance scheme that aims to raise standards of staff play provision across the country including out of school clubs play and childcare providers to ensure quality play opportunities for children. The scheme was developed by playwork practitioners and is based on established playwork values and can be used to demonstrate good practice and quality service to parents, communities and funders.

## The importance and benefits of risky play

It is widely recognised that children who do not engage in risky and challenging play experience throughout their childhood may not acquire the necessary life skills to judge and assess danger. Children need and want risky and challenging play opportunities which allow them to develop a range of skills including social interaction, for example, when working with other children to build a campfire. Provision which can offer these kind of challenges is likely to be more appealing to children.

**Children need and want to take risks when they play. Play provision aims to respond to these needs and wishes by offering children stimulating, challenging environments for exploring and developing their abilities. In doing this, play provision aims to manage the level of risk so children are not exposed to unacceptable risks of death or serious injury. (Managing Risk in Play Provision)**

## Promoting Risky Play Opportunities

The Play Safety Forum in partnership with Play England, has produced **Managing Risk in Play Provision**, to support the work of those involved in play provision including local

authorities. The guidance aims to help providers understand how to offer play opportunities that allow children to access appropriate levels of risk and challenge.

The City of York Play Team welcomes this document and adopts it in full as our position statement. It is fully supported and endorsed by key national organisations with an interest in play and safety. This includes the Health and Safety Executive who state:

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) recognises the importance of play on children's lives and for their opportunities to learn about risk. HSE is pleased to commend the Managing Risk in Play provision: Implementation guide. Its application of risk-benefit assessment is a sensible approach to the health and safety management of play provision.

'The risk benefit assessment recognises that providers can make sound judgements about many risk and benefit relating to play provision but that the need to record their considerations and evidence base systematically. It is in legal terms 'suitable and sufficient' risk assessment in the context of children's play, since it is a reasonable approach to the task of balancing risks against benefits'.

By utilising the Play Team's work in the City, along with the play sector, we have been able to offer play training which identifies the risk/benefit approach. This encourages providers to have the confidence to deliver challenging play opportunities.

The HSE have also produced a series of Myth busters, a range of posters that give clear messages around the myths and issues of health and safety guidelines which includes play <http://www.hse.gov.uk/myth>

5 reasons not to be scared of risky play..

- A child is unlikely to attempt any form of **risky play** that they feel uncomfortable with (e.g. a child would unlikely climb a tree if they did not think that they could)
- If parents/carers are informed that the provision provides risky play opportunities that may feel more comfortable with it. Staff need to explain to parents why they offer risky play opportunities and reassure parents the purpose of risky play is not to put their child at risk, it is an important factor in their development. A **risky play policy** is a good way to ensure that all staff, children and parents are clear on the overall objectives and the procedures in place to minimise risk.
- **Insurance** companies need to be informed of what you intend to do with the children, they often ask for this information when you are renewing your policy. Don't be afraid to tell them, they are often very useful and understand that play provision needs to encourage children to be creative.
- Increases in paper work should not be an issue. Any risky play activities should be appropriately risk assessed to ensure they are safe, but this can be done easily and in the same way as any other **risk assessment** the provision uses.
- Its **fun and exciting** for children and playworkers !

## Active Play

As a society, we are racking our brains to find ways of making children more active just because of the impact that a sedentary lifestyle has on their long-term health. Children are naturally active and given half the chance - and the right space - they hop, skip, run, jump and climb as naturally as breathing. Outdoor active play is an essential component of a healthy childhood but it is also crucial for children's social, emotional and creative development and, most importantly of all, their enjoyment of childhood. It is urgent that

more is done to ensure that all children have the time and space for free play ... for at least an hour a day.

Parental fears over safety, fewer places to play, increased traffic and pressure on public space all contribute to children being kept indoors and ferried about in cars.

Consequently many of today's children are at risk of heart disease, obesity, stroke, diabetes and osteoporosis when they are older.

The government white paper, Choosing Health in 2005, highlighted reduced outdoor play opportunities as one of the contributory factors to childhood obesity, and active play will help work towards reducing this.

A report in the British Medical Journal as early as 2001 said that the main solution to the obesity epidemic in children would be to reduce television viewing and promote playing.

The report identified that 'opportunities for spontaneous play may be the only requirement that young children need to increase their physical activity'. This is further identified in the Health Profile 2010 NHS for York that states that the city has a low percentage of physically active children.

### **Developing Outdoor Play**

In 2008 Play England along with the then DCSF and DCMS produced the Design for Play, a guide to creating successful play space, [www.yor-ok.org.uk/play](http://www.yor-ok.org.uk/play). York has welcomed the introduction of this document and has used it to develop its Playbuilder sites as well as promoting the publication to partners including Parish Councils and play settings. In particular, it embraces the 10 principles for designing a successful play space. The guide states,

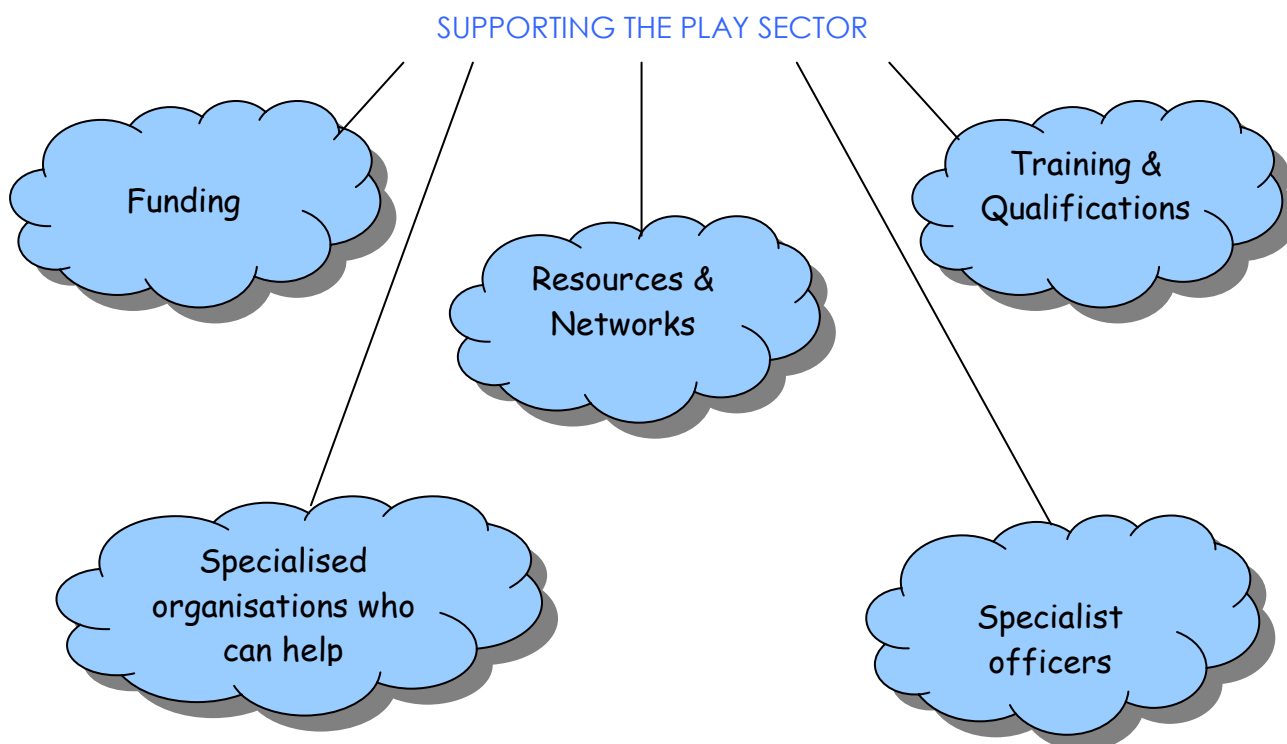
successful play spaces.....

- Are bespoke
- Are well located
- Make use of natural elements
- Provide a wide range of play experiences
- Are accessible to both disabled and non disabled children
- Meet community needs
- Allow children of different ages to play together
- Build in opportunities to experience risk and challenge
- Are sustainable and appropriately maintained
- Allow for change and evolution

**In just a single generation the home habitat of a typical 8 year old - the area that a child can travel around on their own - has shrunk to one ninth of its original size. Children's Play Council, 2004**

## What's out there to help support the development of Play?

The council's Play Team are able to support new ideas and developments within the play sector that increase the range of play opportunities available and raise the quality of play experience for children and young people within the city. The team are able to signpost groups and organisations onto relevant specialised organisations and officers who may also be able to help.



### Funding & specialist Support

To ensure that there are high quality play opportunities, City of York Council, through the Play Team, makes available funding through its Better Play Grants on an annual basis. This funding stream is designed to support organisations that work to address the priorities within the policy, ensuring play is made as widely available to as many children and young people within the city regardless of their background. We are also able to sign post organisations to other relevant funding streams and specialists, who are able to support in preparing for, and making a successful funding bid.

### Resources & Networks

The Play Team supports settings with a variety of resources through its Active Play Equipment Library, a loan scheme designed to add variety to play settings by hiring a range of equipment. [www.yor-ok.org.uk/apel](http://www.yor-ok.org.uk/apel). Guidance documents relating to good practice, including Managing risk in Play provision, can be accessed through [www.yor-ok.org.uk/play](http://www.yor-ok.org.uk/play)

There are also a number of networks for the play sector to attend to help gain the necessary support on topics such as funding, legislation, best practice which the Play Team directly support or can signpost groups to.

### Training and Qualifications

These are offered through the Training Directory and include short courses that support the wider children's workforce. The team are also able to signpost to formal training opportunities provided through accredited training providers.

## **Getting the message out about Play**

In addition to the priorities and in supporting the development of the Taking Play Forward Policy, the Play Team and partners will continue to promote the following areas to ensure that the policy is successfully implemented and that play is embedded within practice and strategy.

- The Better Play Objectives should be considered by all individuals and organisations making decisions which affect (directly or indirectly) the rights of children to play and to be consulted.
- It is recognised that in developing the **Taking Play Forward** policy with play settings signing up to its values, each organisation may wish to further develop the policy to be specific to their own settings.
- The Taking Play Forward Partnership will be merged with the Out of School Club Network to encourage a citywide involvement from the play sector and offer support and guidance.
- Each organisation involved is also encouraged to contribute to the development of York's Children and Young People's plan led by the Children's Trust.
- Communicating good practice and play opportunities through the YorOK website and council publications.
- Shared initiatives for potential joint funding bids will be sought as appropriate.
- Consultation and participation, is key when developing new initiatives and play experiences and should involve all stakeholders involved e.g. children, young people, parents, carers and communities.

## **Who is helping us to implement the Play policy ?**

In **2009**, York hosted a nationally developed Playshaper training event which brought together multi agency representatives including Police, Housing, Parks and Open Spaces, the voluntary sector, City Strategy, Transport and Planning. The training focused on child-friendly design, planning and management of public space and enabled local authority colleagues and other stakeholders to come together and consider how a number of topics affect play:

- The design, planning and management of public space are fundamental to children's quality of life.
- Consideration of children's play and active travel can help deliver on a range of local priorities including community cohesion, health targets and regeneration aims.
- Addressing the needs of children, young people and their parents in the built environment can potentially reduce crime, fear of crime and accidents.

There were a number of outcomes from the event which included:

- New partners were identified who made pledges to assist in the development of play opportunities in the city
- The formation of a new strategic board to ensure the development and implementation of the Taking Play Forward policy

The new **Taking Play Forward Strategic Board**, will meet 4 times a year to provide a strategic steer for the Taking Play Forward policy 2010.

It is the responsibility of the City of York Council's Play Team based in the Lifelong Learning and Culture service to oversee the development and co-ordination of the policy

in conjunction with play partners, relevant internal and external organisations, children and young people, families and communities.

Play settings signing up to the policy are also responsible as individuals and organisations claiming to offer all children good quality play opportunities, to be able to show how the play objectives underpin the play environment.

### **How will the policy be reviewed and monitored ?**

We are committed to regular reviewing and monitoring.

- In conjunction with the play sector, we will carry out annual monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the policy in the absence of an independently constituted play forum.
- All monitoring and reviewing will be part of the annual service plan produced by the Play Team linked to corporate Council plans and the Children and Young People's Plan.
- Monitoring of the policy will be against the action plan to ensure priorities are met.
- Provide formal and informal opportunities for children, young people and play partners to express their views and give feedback on their comments.
- Link evaluation and monitoring to the Best Play guidelines.
- The Play Team have a local Performance Indicator to monitor the number of settings working to the Better Play Objectives.

All grievances or complaints about play provisions should be dealt with in line with Procedures of individuals organisations. Where concerns are expressed in relation to **Taking Play Forward**, the City of York Councils complaints procedure will be followed.

### **The important role of Parents and Carers**

York's Parenting Strategy promotes the importance of play as one of the most important aspects of family life, in building good relationships and highlighting the crucial role of parents and carers in helping their children to play. Parents and carers are supported to recognise the benefits of play through:

- ❑ Strengthening Families course run through Early Years Team
- ❑ Play Team contributing to the Early Start course for parents run by Adult Education
- ❑ Development of a leaflet for parents by Yorkshire Play as part of the Playbuilder project aims to encourage parents to let their children experience what they did as a child. It includes a myth busting section relating to common fears about play, to try to help alleviate fears and highlighting the benefits, about letting children out to play. This will be available later in 2010.
- ❑ Through the Parenting Strategy itself

Play supports children's health & social development and plays a strong role in promoting positive behaviour. Parenting work also supports parents to consider how they manage the balance between the need to offer risk and the need to keep children safe from harm.



## How will Play influence other important plans and strategies?

In revising and developing the Play Policy, the process requires identifying links with other policies. The Play Team are committed to seeing that the views, needs and interests of play, childcare and education providers are reflected within all policies, practices and service plans. This involves consultation with children and young people, parents, the community and other stakeholders and ensures that the community is informed of services.

In 2009, Play England produced "Embedding the Play Strategy" guidance document which supports 'local authorities, Children's Trust Boards and Local Strategic partnerships on sustaining improvements and planning the development of provision and space for children and young peoples play and informal recreation.' This document will be key to help strengthen play in the city and is a key action for this strategy document. (see Action Plan)

The Taking Play Forward policy currently contributes to priority 14 of York's Children and Young Peoples Plan, which highlights the importance of 'developing and extending' York's Play Strategy. The plan is a strategic document which sets out York's vision for York's children and young people and is driven by the YorOK Board (Childrens Trust).

### Play and local strategy

Without Walls Partnership

'Without Walls' is a group of people who are working together to develop a shared vision and look at ways to improve quality of life for people in the city. This partnership (officially the Local Strategic Partnership or LSP) is made up of representatives of public, voluntary and business organisations in York. Partners include the police, council, health, voluntary agencies and local businesses.

The result of their work is the Sustainable Community Strategy, based around seven 'themes' - areas we want to concentrate on to improve the quality of life for everyone in the city over the next twenty years or so. The themes are:

A Sustainable City	Thriving City	An Inclusive City	A City Of Culture
A Learning City	A Safer City	A Healthy City	

Without Walls also have to produce a Local Area Agreement, which is the three-year delivery plan for the community strategy.

The Without walls partnership has a number of subgroups which feed into the main board these include

YorOK Board	York@Large
Economic Development Board	Environment Partnership
Healthy City Board	Lifelong Learning Partnership
Safer York Partnership	Inclusive York Forum

The YorOK Board is the strategic partnership for children and young people's issues in York. The board has responsibility for the City of York's Children and Young peoples Plan as well as relevant aspects of the Local area Agreement.

The Taking Play Forward Strategic Board will report progress of the policy developments, that will also reflect any issues from our play networks, eg Out of School Club Network. to the YorOK Board to influence and input into York's Children and Young Peoples Plan.

### Examples of where partners are making a difference to support and raise the quality of Play

#### Lottery programme - Sport and Active Leisure - Climbing Boulders, Active Play

The councils Sport and Active Leisure team have been keen to develop links with the play sector, as they recognise that play contributes to children and young people becoming active. BIG Lottery Funding has enabled the implementation of an inspired project that has allowed the Sport and Active leisure team to think creatively about how play can support the development of physical activity and PE curriculum ideas. The project, York's very first climbing boulder, is a piece of equipment that develops outdoor adventurous activities for children and young people that can be used by the community, and by schools to enhance PE curriculum. Sport and Active Leisure are passionate about children learning to manage risk and this project is seen to be an exciting and innovative way of working across a variety of sectors. This project had inspired further thinking around the development future risky and challenging active play opportunities

#### Kool Kids Club - Out of School Club for 4 to 11 years

"By accessing the funding available through the Better Play Grant, Ward Committee Grant and the Shine Funding ,we have developed our outdoor provision and risky play opportunities for the Clifton with Rawcliffe Community. We now have a large covered outdoor sand pit, bikes, scooters, roll-a-rounds, two parachutes, den building equipment, a B.B.Q. and a Potter's Wheel. We regularly access the Climbing Boulder at Rawcliffe Country Park, the Mobile Skate Park and Climbing Wall and this Summer went to energise to swim climb and skate. These activities and equipment have been bought and organised from consultation with the children when deciding the funding bids. As a setting, this approach is able to demonstrate that we are working to, raise the standards of play provision and extend the choice and control that children have over their play, **2 of the 9 Better Play Objectives.**"

### What if I want to build a career in Play?

#### **YorOK Workforce Strategy**

The YorOK Children and Young People's Workforce includes everyone that works with or for children, young people and families in York, on a paid or unpaid basis. This includes roles in health, early years, education, youth, sports and culture, social family and community support and justice and crime prevention. The YorOK Workforce Strategy sets out the YorOK Children's Trust's commitment to its workforce and to ensuring that its members have the support, information and skills they need to improve outcomes for the children, young people and families with whom they work. This Taking Play Forward strategy sits within the overarching framework of the YorOK Workforce Strategy. For more information visit [www.yor-ok.org.uk/workforce](http://www.yor-ok.org.uk/workforce)

## Supporting Playworkers

York recognises the importance of and challenges to recruiting and retaining an appropriately qualified Play workforce. To encourage growth and development within the playwork sector, York is able to offer the following support:

- a programme of training for the children's workforce is available and developed through feedback from the workforce through the authorities Training and Development Unit. [www.yor-ok.org.uk/tdu](http://www.yor-ok.org.uk/tdu)
- 'Welcome to YorOK sessions' are available on an ongoing basis, accompanied by an online Induction tool kit to help the childrens workforce understand their training needs, which includes sign posting to online training resources and courses.
- Specialised Playworker training is available through accredited training providers
- Support is offered through the Family Information Service to assist settings in recruiting staff including free recruitment advertising and advice and guidance on safer recruitment practises. Support is available for potential childcare workers together with raising the profile of playwork and promotion at relevant job fairs.
- regularly advertise job opportunities through the YorOK website and newsletter.
- Promotion of funding opportunities to enable play workers to achieve relevant skills and qualifications to meet legal requirements and promote anti-discriminatory practices.
- Promotion of the SkillsActive strategy

## Skills Active Strategy

'Quality Play' sets out an approach to supporting high quality play provision through education and training 2011– 2016.

Building on this, is the SkillsActive Playwork Learning and Skills Strategy which is based on the playwork principles which establish a professional and ethical framework for playwork. The principles are:

- ❑ All children and young people need to play. The impulse to play is innate. Play is a biological, psychological and social necessity and is fundamental to the healthy development and well being of individuals and communities.
- ❑ Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is, children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way for their own reasons.
- ❑ The prime focus and essence of playwork is to support and facilitate the play process and this should inform the development of play policy, strategy, training and education.
- ❑ For playworkers, the play process takes precedence and playworkers act as advocates for play when engaging with adult led agendas.
- ❑ The role of the playworker is to support all children and young people in the creation of a space in which they can play.
- ❑ The playworkers response to children and young people is based on a sound up to date knowledge of the play process and reflective practice.
- ❑ Playworkers recognise their own impact on the play space and also the impact of children and young peoples play on the playworker.

- ❑ Playworkers choose an intervention style that enables children and young people to extend their play. All intervention must balance risk with the development benefit and well being of the children.

### **The Play Sector workforce**

The Play sector covers a range of settings across the city including; Out of School Clubs, Holiday Playschemes, Open access provision and play areas.

A variety of career opportunities are available including;

- ❑ Volunteering
- ❑ Playworker (unqualified)
- ❑ Playworker (qualified) Level 2 or 3 options are available
- ❑ Deputy Level 3 qualification
- ❑ Coordinator/Manager Level 3/4 qualification
- ❑ NVQ Assessor level 3 in relevant qualification plus A1 award
- ❑ Play Development Officer Foundation Degree or degree qualification in related field.

Ongoing CPD including management opportunities and Transitional modules for practitioners with current Level 3 qualifications in Early Years are available within the city. For further information relating to any training requirements please contact Kerry Revill or Karen Darley on 01904 554629

For a full list of full and relevant Playwork Qualifications please visit:

<http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/qualifications-list>

also "Pathways to Playwork" link (from SkillsActive website)

To view current opportunities within the play sector visit the York website, sign up to receive a fortnightly play bulletin or visit your local Children's centre.

For individual careers advice please contact Karen Darley 554444 or via [www.york.org.uk/jobs](http://www.york.org.uk/jobs)

Individuals can register as a recruitment candidate and gain support and advice with regard to career and training opportunities.

Settings meet as a network within the city bi-monthly to discuss current issues and share good practise. Speakers and training providers are invited to contribute.

### **Case study – FunFishers Out of School Club**

*My name is Lesley Calvert, I manage Funfishers out of school club, which consists of a 40 place breakfast/afterschool/holiday club, and an 18 place playgroup term time. Age range is from 2 to 11 years.*

*The setting is a registered charity run by a voluntary parent committee who are trustees to the club. I manage a team of approximately 15 practitioners/play workers and 10 volunteers on a day to day basis.*

*I got into play work as a relief assistant in 1999, this then extended to five nights per week and holiday club work, within the first couple of years I achieved my level 2 and 3 in play work and enjoyed the college life and learning more about the job as a play worker. Since 2007 we have added a new branch to our setting with the playgroup and this has furthered my professional development by studying for my FdA in Young Children's Learning and Development over the last three years. I will continue this year to do my BA (Hons) starting in September.*

*The out of school club works well by following the **9 Better Play objectives**. We all know that play is an essential part of a child's life to develop into confident young adults. We*

*create a warm and welcoming atmosphere where children are consulted on what they want rather than what they are getting, children's artwork is displayed and all are respected and valued in their own right. Staff are trained appropriately to enhance the child's play by responding appropriately to children's ideas and discussions. Children have free flow access to both indoor and the outdoor environment, and in recent years we have acquired our own allotment, giving children life skills and stimulating alternatives. Funfishers is a very diverse group respecting every culture in its own way; many children bring in their own ideas and parents and family members help us to learn about the wider world that we live in. Children play in small or large groups but sometimes prefer to be on their own, we respect this as we know that children learn at the highest level through play and as a setting we will continue to support each child with experiences and activities that are challenging but achievable.*

Annexes – Useful Information & Contacts:

	Annexes and Web Links.
Assumptions and Values of Playwork	Annex a
Play types	Annex b
Better Play criteria – National Play Council	Annex c
Criteria for enriched Play environment	Annex d
Charter for Childrens Play	<a href="http://www.playengland.org/resources/charter-for-children">http://www.playengland.org/resources/charter-for-children</a>
Pathways to Playwork	<a href="http://www.playworkactivepassport.com/SectorSkills/UserSearch.asp">http://www.playworkactivepassport.com/SectorSkills/UserSearch.asp</a>
Better Play Objectives – (cut out, sign & laminate)	Back Page
How to contact the City of York Councils Play Team – includes information about their associated projects	Back Page
This policy along with its <b>Action Plan</b> , supporting documents and links to useful websites that helped in the development of this project can be found on the YorOK website	<a href="http://www.yor-ok.org.uk">www.yor-ok.org.uk</a> telephone 554444

## **Assumptions and Values of Playwork**

The National Occupational Standards for Playwork describe the functions that competent practitioners should carry out. However, the standards are based on a set of principles and values that underpin good practice in Playwork. These principles and values are not unique to the National Occupational Standards. They summarise the outcomes of a number of studies of children's play and professional Playwork, most recently 'Best Value' and 'The First Claim' in Wales.

The first principle in about children's play:

Children's play is for its own sake, not for a particular outcome. Play is about exploration, risk and challenge and is essential for children to develop. Children choose what and how they play.

The second principle is about the professional role of the play worker:

The main role of the Playworker is ensuring that their play setting offers opportunities for children to access and experience all play types. The playworker has unconditional respect for children and supports their play without controlling it.

The Values of Playwork include:

- 1 The child is at the centre of the process
- 2 Empowerment
- 3 Children's rights
- 4 Risk and challenge
- 5 Safety
- 6 Children's individuality
- 7 Equality of opportunity
- 8 New experiences
- 9 Positive role models
- 10 Reflection and evaluation

### Play Types

These play types are adapted from 'Best Play' (National Playing Fields Association, March 2000) and 'The First Claim', a framework for playworker quality assessment' (Play Wales/Chwarae Cymru and Play Ed, 2001) which in turn are adapted from earlier work by Bob Hughes.

- ⇒ **Symbolic Play** - Play, which allows control, gradual exploration and increased understanding, without the risk of being out of one's depth. For example - using a piece of wood to symbolise a person, or a piece of string to symbolise a wedding ring.
- ⇒ **Exploratory Play** - Play to access factual information consisting of manipulation or movement, assessing its properties, possibilities and contents, such as stacking bricks.
- ⇒ **Rough and Tumble** - Close encounter play which is less to do with fighting and more to do with touching, tickling, gauging relative strength, discovering physical flexibility and exhilaration of display. For example playful fighting, wrestling and chasing where the children involved are obviously unhurt and giving every indication that they are enjoying themselves.
- ⇒ **Fantasy Play** - Play, which rearranges the world in the child's way, a way that is unlikely to occur. For example playing at being a pilot around the world or an owner of an expensive car.
- ⇒ **Socio-dramatic Play** - The enactment of real and potential experiences of an intense personal, social, domestic or interpersonal nature. For example - playing at house, going to the shops, being mothers and fathers, organising a meal or even having a row.
- ⇒ **Imaginative Play** - Play where the convenience rules, which govern the physical world, do not apply. For example - imagining you are, or pretending to be, a tree or ship, or patting a dog, which isn't there.
- ⇒ **Social Play** - Play during which the rules and criteria for social engagement and interaction can be revealed, explored and amended. For example - any social or interactive situation which contains an expectation on all parties that they will abide by the rules or protocols, i.e. games, conversations, making something together.
- ⇒ **Loco motor Play** - Movement in any and every direction for its sake. For example - chase, tag, hide and seek, tree climbing.
- ⇒ **Creative Play** - Play that allows a new response, a transformation of information, awareness of new connections, with an element of surprise. For example - enjoying creation with a range of materials and tools for its own sake.
- ⇒ **Mastery Play** - Control of the physical and affective ingredients. For example - digging holes, changing the course of streams, constructing shelters and building fires.
- ⇒ **Communication Play** - Play using words, nuances or gestures for example mime, jokes, play acting, mickey taking, singing, debate, poetry.
- ⇒ **Object Play** - Play which uses infinite and interesting sequences of hand-eye manipulations and movements. For example - examination and novel use of the object e.g. cloth, paintbrush, and cup.
- ⇒ **Dramatic Play** - Play that dramatizes events in which the child is not a direct participator. For example presentation of a TV show, an event on the street, a religious or festive event, even a funeral.
- ⇒ **Role Play** - Play exploring ways of being, although not normally of an intense personal, social, domestic or interpersonal nature. For example doctors and nurses.
- ⇒ **Deep Play** - Play which allows the child to encounter risky or even potentially life threatening experiences, to develop survival skills and conquer fear. For example leaping onto an aerial runway, riding a bike on a parapet, balancing on a high beam.



## Better Play Criteria

These are drawn from those recommended by the national Children's Play Council and are being developed through local consultations with children, young people, adults and organisations with an interest in play. The types of information or activity should **be specific, measurable and relate to real examples of play work**. It may include one or more of the following:

<b>Better Play Criteria</b>	<b>How this may be demonstrated</b>
<b>Raise the standards of play provision</b>	A measurable description of how play activities have improved over the year
<b>Encourage joint working between children, individuals and services with interests in play</b>	Specific active links to show co-operative working with <b>children</b> and named individuals, services or other organisations
<b>Increase the recognition of the importance of play</b>	A specified number of promotional activities e.g. open days, press coverage, participation in local community events
<b>Provides children with their rights to play</b>	Enabling specified times and places for free-play opportunities and offering a variety of identifiable play experiences (formal or informal)
<b>Extends the choice and control that children have over their play</b>	Quotes, pictures etc to show the active involvement of children in planning, choosing, managing, evaluating and continuing their own play opportunities over time
<b>Values equality and encourages social inclusion</b>	Working policies, monitoring reports, specific links with local minority groups, diversity of service users /staff and volunteers
<b>Celebrates diversity through a range of play opportunities</b>	Measurable examples to show how children are supported in exploring the natural, social and cultural world beyond their usual experiences; evaluation of play activities
<b>Promotes lifelong learning for children and adults</b>	Specific numbers and ways children seen to build knowledge through consecutive play activities over time; Ongoing training programme for adult service users and for the service providers; Evaluation and review of processes being developed
<b>Practices community development and positive social behaviour</b>	Involvement of, and in, the wider community on two or more specified occasions; positive role models in staff and service users; two specific examples of ways in which independence self-esteem, respecting people and places have been encouraged
<b>Promotes healthy life Styles</b>	Identify particular and relevant activities; Provision of information on health and environmental issues; involvement of users in menus / food based activities
<b>Has good employment practices</b>	Recruitment practices are clear and open, equality of opportunity demonstrated, staff and volunteer induction, contracts, relevant training, reviews
<b>Meets relevant legislative requirements</b>	OFSTED as relevant; Risk Assessment; relevant training /qualifications; policies vs practices; insurance; balance risk and challenge whilst being safe from harm
<b>How are your users involved in and consulted about decision making in your organisation?</b>	This question reflects the Council's commitment to local services that enable local people, and particularly service users, to have some influence over how the service is provided and run

### Criteria for an enriched play environment.

The following criteria for an enriched play environment are adapted from those given in Hughes (1996a). The examples given for each section are in no sense exhaustive, merely indicative.

Play provision should provide opportunities for:

- **A varied and interesting physical environment.**

Examples: things at different levels, spaces of different sizes, places to hide, trees and bushes as well as things that have been made, places to inspire mystery and imagination.

- **Challenge in relation to the physical environment.**

Examples: activities which test the limits of capabilities, rough and tumble, sports and games, chase.

- **Playing with natural elements – earth, water, fire, air.**

Examples: campfires, digging, playing snowballs, flying kites.

- **Movement – e.g. running, jumping, rolling, climbing, balancing.**

Examples: beams and ropes, soft mats, bike riding, juggling equipment, ladders, space.

- **Manipulating natural and fabricated materials.**

Examples: materials for art, cooking, making and mending of all kinds; building dens; making concoctions; using tools; access to bits and pieces of all kinds.

- **Stimulation of the five senses.**

Examples: music making, places where shouting is fine, quiet places, different colours and shapes, dark and bright spaces, cooking on a camp fire, rotting leaves, a range of food and drink, objects that are soft, prickly, flexible, large and small.

- **Experiencing change in the natural and built environment.**

Examples: experiencing the seasons through access to the outdoor environment, opportunities to take part in building, demolishing, or transforming the environment.

- **Social interactions.**

Examples: being able to choose weather and when to play alone or with others, to negotiate, co-operate, compete and resolve conflicts. Being able to interact with individuals and groups of different ages, abilities, interests, gender, ethnicity and culture.

- **Playing with identity.**

Examples: dressing up, role-play, performing, taking on different kinds of responsibility.

- **Experiencing a range of emotions.**

Examples: opportunities to be powerful/powerless, scared/confident, liked/disliked, in/out of control, brave/cowardly.

# We are Taking Play Forward



We recognise the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts

Adopted from the UN Convention on The Rights of the Child - Article 31 - December 1991

Organisation Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Type of Provision \_\_\_\_\_

We are committed to promoting the importance of play as we:

- Extend the choice and control children have over their play, the freedom they enjoy and the satisfaction they gain from it
- Value the different needs of individual children to test boundaries and respond positively to their needs
- Celebrate diversity through a range of play opportunities
- Manage the balance between the need to offer risk and the need to keep children safe from harm
- Foster children's independence and self-esteem
- Foster children's respect for others and offer opportunities for positive social interaction
- Promote the child's well-being, healthy growth and development, knowledge and understanding, creativity and capacity to learn

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

(On behalf of Organisation)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

(On behalf of City of York Council)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**The City Of York Council's Play Team aims to promote play across the city and works to address the priorities outlined in the Taking Play Forward policy. In addition the team promotes and delivers play opportunities through the following projects. To contact the Play Team please call 01904 553426**

### **Shine**

A programme of activities for children and young people aged 5–18 and families, each and every school holiday period. Activities and events include play, sports, arts, parks and open spaces, young peoples and library services and is coordinated in conjunction with key partners from local communities, voluntary, commercial and professional organisations.



### **The Active Play Equipment Library**

A service which provides a stock of active equipment which is available to hire to providers working with children aged 18 months to 14 years to enhance their provision, which is supported by appropriate training. A delivery and collection service is available.



### **Street Sport York**

Street Sport York aims to bring sport and play activities to children and young people across the city and beyond. The mobile unit delivers a wide variety of activities including multi sport sessions, a mobile skate park and a mobile climbing tower.



### **Taking Play Forward – Better Play Grants**

The Taking Play Forward grant is available to voluntary and community organisations on an annual basis, for those working with 5 – 18 years olds, who meet the 9 Better Play Objectives.

### **Lottery Projects**

In 2008, the Play team secured £328K worth of Lottrey funding to develop 4 projects. These include Leaside Play Area, Adventure Play equipment at Park Grove School, Environmental Play at 5 sites across the city through The Yorkshire Wildlife Trusts Running Wild project and the installation of Climbing Boulders at Rawcliffe Country Park.

